WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY – Founded December 19, 1857 JANUARY 1978

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Chelsea Historical Society— 8 p.m. Monday, February 13, in McKune Memorial Library. Installation of officers. No meeting in January.

Dexter Historical Society— Museum closed for winter except by appointment by calling 426-8972.

Milan Historical Society— 7:30 p.m. third Wednesday of each month at Milan Community House.

Saline Historical Society— 8 p.m. third Tuesday of each month at high school library. Annual meeting in January.

Ypsilanti Historical Society— 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, January 22, at Museum. Annual meeting with reports and election of board members. Fred Peters has been appointed treasurer to succeed Jim Westfall who has served ten years.

HISTORIC HOMES CLASS

A U-M extension course on "Historic Homes in Michigan" will begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday, January 24, in the seminar room of Perry School in Ann Arbor. Mid-Michigan homes will be featured in the 10-week lecture and slide series, including Ann Arbor and Saline. For more information telephone 763-4321.

CHELSEA ELECTS OFFICERS, GWEN SCHRADER PRESIDENT

Mrs. Donald (Gwen) Schrader has been elected president of the Chelsea Historical Society for the coming year. Katy Chapman is vice-president; Marge Hepburn, secretary; and Lois Moore, treasurer.

Directors are Janet Ferrero, Harold Jones and Sally Nicola. Hazel Dittmar is membership chairman.

'CHICAGO ROAD' IS TOPIC

Herb Bartlett, a retired engineer and long-time member of WCHS, has spent considerable time researching the 1825 survey of the "Chicago Road" from Detroit across territorial Michigan to Chicago. He will talk about his findings at the February 23 WCHS meeting.

NEW MEMBERS SOUGHT

Membership Chairman Angela Welch is seeking to increase the Washtenaw County Historical Society membership through a recent mailing to 500 prospects. She plans another mailing in the spring to another 500 persons. Mrs. David (Connie) Osler will assist her.

GENEALOGY GROUP BECOMES 'GSWC', PLANS MEETINGS

The genealogy group which has been a section of WCHS has incorporated as an independent non-profit organization called the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County (GSWC).

The WCHS board has accepted with regret the resignation of the officers of the section but wishes to maintain a cooperative relationship with the group which has expressed a similar desire toward WCHS.

GSWC has scheduled out of town speakers for its next two meetings. Curtis Bradley of Grand Rapids, president of the Michigan Genealogical Council, will speak on "What Is A Certified Genealogist and How To Become One" at the January meeting. Richard Hathaway of the Michigan State Library will speak in February on how to use that library.

The group meets at 2:30 p.m. on the fourth Sunday of each month at Washtenaw Community College.

MICHIGAN IN ICE AGE WHEN MASTODONS ROAMED TO BE JANUARY TOPIC

Michigan in the days when mastodons, musk-oxen and giant beaver roamed here will be the topic of the January WCHS meeting at 8 p.m. Thursday, January 26, in Liberty Hall at Ann Arbor Federal Savings, Liberty at Division Streets.

Professor Gerald R. Smith, director of the U-M museum of paleontology and associate curator of the museum of zoology, will give a slide-illustrated talk about Michigan 10,000 years ago. His topic is "Ice Age Animals and Environments in Michigan."

Professor Smith received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Utah and his doctorate from Michigan. His main field of research has been the evolution and ecology of freshwater fishes.

He has also been involved in the collection of several mastodons and other fossils in Michigan and is interested in using past animal and plant distributions as indicators of prehistoric climates.

LOIS FOYLE NAMED TO WCHS BOARD, APPEALS FOR PLANTS

Lois Foyle, chairman of last fall's very successful green plant sale, has been appointed to the WCHS Board of Directors to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Rosemary Whelan.

Lois is already planning on next September's sale and asks members to get plants started right away. It's not a bit too soon— the bigger the plants the better, she says.

STORY OF YPSI HOUSE

SHOWPLACE TO EIGHT APARTMENTS TO MUSEUM

Marble salesman Aaron Goodrich and His Honor Lambert Barnes would probably have felt at home at the 1977 Washtenaw County Historical Society Christmas party if they could have been there via time machine.

It was held at the Ypsilanti Historical Society Museum and Archives at 220 N. Huron Street which was their home successively about a century ago. The house underwent a great deal of change but recently has been restored much as it was when they occupied it.

The fourteen-room brick house was festively decorated with traditional greens and red bows all about—on fireplace mantels, tables, and the curving stair rail to the second floor. A Christmas tree surrounded by antique toys stood in the children's room upstairs and a more formal tree downstairs.

Several volunteers from the Ypsilanti Society welcomed WCHS visitors and acted as guides. After a tour visitors could sip eggnog and sample Christmas cookies—traditional lebkuchen and springerle as well as more modern varieties.

Restoring the one-time Ypsilanti showplace which opened as a museum in 1971 was no simple task. In recent years it housed eight apartments. Restoration was not only a matter of steaming off successive layers of wallpaper. It also required tearing out later walls and most of those bathrooms.

While none of the furnishings of the nineteenth century occupants is there, several rooms have been furnished appropriately for their period. Other rooms have a variety of exhibits from the YHS collection—arrow heads, buttons, Civil War memorabilia, clothing, quilts, and tools for kitchens and cloth making from the days of spinning wheels and sadirons.

Courtesy of Museum

YPSILANTI HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Former Ypsilanti showplace built in 1860.

The house was built in 1860 by Asa Dow, a friend and business partner of Daniel Lace Quirk who preceded him to Ypsilanti from Chicago. It is right next door to the larger mansard-roofed former Quirk home until recently used as Ypsilanti City Hall.

Both houses are situated on a bluff above the Huron River and their grounds originally extended to the river. Each had a matching carriage house.

Contemporary newspapers attest that Dow was active in Ypsilanti business affairs for a few years before he returned to Chicago. He was elected president of the newly-organized First National Bank on December 16, 1863. He also was an organizer of the Ypsilanti Woolen Manufacturing Company.

Perhaps because of the death of his wife in July 1864 he left Ypsilanti. Minerva Miles Dow was the second person buried in the newly dedicated Highland Cemetery.

Quirk remained and was long prominent in Ypsilanti business affairs. He was involved with Dow in organizing the bank and woolen company. He also helped organize the city gas plant and Peninsular Paper Company of which he later became president. The family remained associated with the paper company for four generations until it was recently sold. A grandson, Daniel T. Quirk was mayor in 1947-51. A great grandson, Daniel G., was company president at the time of sale.

A. M. Goodrich, a one-time sea captain and Saline pioneer, bought the Dow house and household goods for $14,000 according to a March 17, 1865, newspaper. Later that spring the *Ypsilanti Commercial* spoke glowingly of the handsome fence with which Goodrich and Quirk were enclosing their residences:

> "It is mainly of wood but molded and sanded to imitate iron . . . we have seen nothing so tasty. We are told its cost was $30 per rod."

Goodrich came to town to manage the Follett House, then Ypsilanti's largest and finest hotel. But after 1866 he became a salesman for the Batchelder and Company Monument Works which furnished cemetery monuments throughout southern Michigan. He and his wife, Julia, lived in the house for several years.

In May 1879 the Goodriches moved to Saline and opened the Goodrich House. The new owners of the house that was then 42 N.

Huron Street were Mr. and Mrs. Lambert A. Barnes.

Mrs. Jane Barnes was a daughter of Robert Geddes, one of the county's earliest pioneers. Her husband became president of the Peninsular Paper Company and the bank. He also was mayor from 1875-78 and 1879-80.

Mr. Barnes went to Detroit to have an ulcerated tooth taken care of and died unexpectedly June 30, 1887, apparently from the anesthetic used according to Mrs. Dottie Disbrow, archivist. Mrs. Barnes lived in the house until her death on July 9, 1893.

Later a Miss Ross bought the house and divided it into four apartments. She never lived there. One apartment was occupied by Frederick Alexander, longtime head of the music department at the Normal (now Eastern Michigan University).

The house had been divided into eight apartments and was owned by the city when Mayor John Burton offered it to the society for a museum in 1967-68. (Mayor Burton was Ypsilanti's first black mayor and then one of only two in the U.S.)

Renovation began. There were four fireplaces downstairs. They were cleaned and polished. They looked like black marble but proved to be imitation.

Underneath layers of wallpaper they found original painted stencilwork. It would have been much too expensive to restore so only sample sections have been left exposed in the front hall and archive room.

A solarium in a bay on the south side had a slat floor open to the basement. It allowed sufficient heat to flow from the furnace for the plants. The solarium is now well stocked with Victorian era plants.

A small front porch to the left of the entrance had no door, but the lower sash of the tall front windows could be pushed up—vertical sliding glass doors as it were—to allow almost anyone but a basketball player to walk out onto it without ducking.

In 1975 the Historical Society of Michigan presented its "Award of Merit" to the Ypsilanti Historical Society for "its development and operation of a successful historical museum."

The city owns the house and provided $14,000 toward the basic renovation. It continues to pay for utilities and a part-time archivist. Until recently there was a part-time paid director who has moved away.

Otherwise museum operation depends on volunteers and special money raising efforts for improvement projects, such as papering the entrance hall or the current basement renovation.

About fifty persons take turns once each month as guides. There is also a board and administration committee. The museum is open from 2 to 4 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

RESEARCH FURTHER IDENTIFIES WCHS BENEFACTORS WHOSE LEGACIES LIVE ON IN SOCIETY COLLECTIONS

A $2,226 check to WCHS last spring from the estate of the late Sara Parker prompted some research into her identity.

It turns out she was one of three local women who died within months of each other in 1940-41 and who made bequests to the Society.

The others were Lucy Chapin who gave us Ann Arbor's first piano among other things and Marie Louise Douglas. Miss Douglas willed her home at 502 E. Huron Street next door to the First Baptist Church to the U-M Regents for the use of WCHS. They refused it and it became the American Baptist Student Center.

Miss Douglas also gave us her collection of nineteenth century costumes about which Curator Stuart Thayer was seeking more information.

Her obituary in the March 21, 1941, *Ann Arbor News* says:

> "She had a rare collection of women's costumes dating back to Civil War days and frequently opened her home to visitors in connection with church activities (at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church) for inspection of the dresses and of her unusual collection of letters of historical interest."

Presumably the letters are included in the Douglas Papers in the Michigan Historical Collection in the U-M Bentley Library.

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He went with her cousin Dr. Douglas Houghton when he discovered the copper deposits near Houghton, Michigan, in the mid-nineteenth century. Miss Douglas gave her father's papers relating to that expedition to the City of Houghton.

Miss Parker died August 4, 1940, at her home, 913 Church Street. She gave WCHS a number of antique furnishings and dishes then 70 to 150 years old according to her 1930 will.

She also set up a trust fund to care for the antiques. Recently the cost of administering the trust exceeded the income so it was dissolved and the fund given to WCHS.

Miss Parker was born March 19, 1860, in Angelica, New York, to Charles C. and Cornelia Charles Parker. The family moved to Hillsdale, Michigan, where her father was a practicing attorney and she graduated from Hillsdale College.

She came to Ann Arbor with her parents in the early 1900's. Her father apparently died here and was buried in Forest Hill Cemetery but the first listing in the Ann Arbor City Directory is of her mother as a widow in 1905.

Her newspaper obituary says

she was a member of the Ladies Library Association Board for several years and "interested in many educational fields."

She made several other bequests to groups and individuals including $10,000 to the U-M for two fellowships for young men for study of English literature in memory of a brother. Also receiving bequests were the Anna Botsford Bach Home, Public Health Nurses Association, the American Society for Psychical Research, and a $6,000 trust to "aid and benefit crippled children of the poor at University hospital." Proceeds of that trust were to go through the Kings Daughters in memory of her sister.

Items she gave included a mahogany bureau, a grandfather clock, an 1850 rosewood piano, a small white pitcher with green and pink trimmings then said to be more than 150 years old.

She also gave several items to the U-M department of fine arts which if refused were to go to WCHS. Probate papers indicate WCHS got them. They included furniture, candlesticks, and three portraits painted by John Phillips.

The piano Miss Chapin gave the Society was restored in 1974 and played at meetings in December 1974 and April 1975. Miss Chapin also left many scrapbooks and other papers she collected over a lifetime in Ann Arbor. They are at the U-M Bentley Library.

The bequests of these three public spirited Ann Arbor women added a great deal to the WCHS collection and the local historical legacy.

MILAN RE-ELECTS OFFICERS

Milan Historical Society re-elected its 1977 slate of officers for the coming year. Warren R. Hale will continue as president with Arleigh Squires, vice-president, Susan Bies, secretary; and Carole Smith, treasurer.

The board will have one new member—Andrea Rumps—replacing Ken Baumann. Continuing on the board are Oliver Curry, Bill Smith, Lorene Burger and Mark Lathers.

SUCCESS OF BOOK PROMPTS GIFTS

The success of Alloa Anderson and Polly Bender's new book, Genealogy in Michigan: What, When and Where" has resulted in two $25 gifts to WCHS from the Benders and Andersons respectively.

The 30-page paperback booklet is believed to be the only such guide to information sources for family history in the state. It is available from Mrs. Anderson at 1120 Lincoln, telephone 663-2128, for $2.50.

THEN WHAT DID HE SAY?

He was teaching her to drive and sat next to her, directing her efforts, while she was at the wheel. They came to a steep hill and climbed it with much puffing and jerking of the little Ford. When the top was reached, he wiped the perspiration from his forehead and exclaimed:

"We had a tough time getting up here, didn't we?"

"Yes," she replied, "and if I hadn't kept the brakes on we surely would have slipped back."

From "Ford Smiles: All the Best Current Jokes About A Rattling Good Car," by Carleton B. Case, Shrewesbury Publishing Co., Chicago, 1917.

ALLOA ANDERSON EXHIBITS CHRISTMAS HANDIWORK

Alloa Anderson's handmade Christmas tree skirts of original design served as tablecloths at the WCHS December party in Ypsilanti.

She also contributed some of the traditional cookies featured in her new cooky book and exhibited her original handknit Christmas stockings.

One skirt has symbols of Christmas, the other traditions of Christmas illustrated in applique and embroidery on a green background. One tradition, the gifts of "The Twelve Days of Christmas," turned out to be a large undertaking. Furthermore, the gifts as repeated each day in the song add up to 365, she noted.

The stockings feature Santa's face with a beard of special fuzzy angora yarn doubled. Each stocking also has attached charms reflecting the interests of each child and grandchild.

WASHTENAW COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEETING

8 P. M. THURSDAY
JANUARY 26, 1978
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